wanted to protect jute manufacturers and because jute industry was running in losses. That is why we have supported them. ...*(Interruptions)*...

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order please.

SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: Finally, employment opportunities in the jute sector would be affected.

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: Now, come to the point. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI R.L. JALAPPA: Madam, I do not want to go into the question of degradable or biodegradable. Some people say plastic is biodegradable. Some people say jute is biodegradable. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI SIKANDER BAKHT: What does the Government say? ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI R.L. JALAPPA: Madam, now we are living in a degradable atmosphere. These are small things. I do not know how much it is going to pollute the atmosphere. I do not know whether plastic bags are going to pollute the atmosphere or jute bags are going to pollute the atmosphere.

Now, this is the question. There are producers of jute. They have to be protected. That is the main important thing. In addition to that, the consumer also is to be protected here. The consumer cannot also be taxed. He says that this bag costs Rs. 4/- more; there is a seepage of three to four per cent. All these things will be taken into consideration and a final decision will be taken within a month or so. I assure this House.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: As you have to protect the jute growers, there could be some other alternative use of that. *(Interruptions)*. Question Hour is over. Papers to be laid on the Table.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO STARRED QUESTIONS

Funds for Pochampad Irrigation Project

*441. SHRI K.M. KHAN: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have been requested to release funds for early completion of Pochampad-2nd Phase Irrigation Project of Andhra Pradesh;

(b) if so, the details thereof with the reasons for delay;

(c) whether Government propose to take some action on such requests in the interest of the development of the State; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d) In the Budget for the current year an amount of Rs. 1300 crores has been provided for the Accelerated Irrigation Benefits Programme. The assistance to projects will be provided according to guidelines laid down for the purpose.

Feasibility study of the Rohtang Tunnel

*444. SHRI SUSHIL BARONGPA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to refer to the answer to Starred Question 397 given in the Rajya Sabha on 18th December, 1996 and state:

(a) whether M/s. Rites have submitted the report with regard to the second phase of the Feasibility Study on Rohtang Tunnel; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI MULAYAM SINGH YADAV): (a) and (b) M/s RITES have submitted the Report with regard to Second Phase of the Feasibility Study of the Tunnel. The Report is in six volumes. It indicates